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357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[462] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the
salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
466 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new element of
875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not legal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

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C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yägäläté danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Kayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services [481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 562 Women are not admitted even into this third outer enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer colonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

874 sophy, "mäṣehāf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on
538 the subject. Also studied are the "käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

e Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 --onks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

C. Stratification by Sex.

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Stratification by Sex among Amhara affects women of nobility often differently than women of the commoner class, but in some ways it affects both.

Well-remembered and not atypical for noblewomen is the example of Empress Taitu, who married Emperor Menelik as her 5th husband, and who led her own feudal troops into the Battle of Adua in 1896. Such deeds of noblewomen occur often in Abyssinian history. This is not surprising, for the daughters of noblemen are raised by servants with as much deference and prestige as are the sons, and consequently develop equal and even occasionally dominating personalities. Concomitant with the usual literalness in Amhara culture, a noblewoman who fulfills a male function may be addressed in the male gender. The memorial feast ("tazkar") of a noblewoman is as elaborate as that of a nobleman.

A noblewoman is exempt from many disabilities of her sex. She regularly rides a mule, using a man's saddle, and in this case wearing a man's jodphurs under her long cotton skirts. Unlike other women, who does not have to redrape her shamma respectfully when meeting a man of equal rank, only when going to church or before a judge. When she enters court, the commoner judge rises to greet her. When she approaches the church, the priest bows before her, and may even permit her to stand just inside the door of the outermost enclosure, usually reserved for nuns. A landowning woman-

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562 565 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually appoints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed [585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye [675] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Neverheless, her legal position is by no means as [586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizē"- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out- [854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

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562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ç̣hera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ç̣hera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "ämmä bet" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesänna" (from "qäs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

562 602 [539] "The killer? (It was) your husband;
The victim? (It was) your brother.
Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"
(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyet qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)
"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syetä" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

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●562 While Amhara men consider women inferior in theory, Amhara women do not necessarily accept this judgement; and, in the case of upper class or advanced age females, men admit that this judgement does not necessarily hold validity in practice.

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855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "geltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täqəmtälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "qəmtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("täsaca") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever [562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("yätäwäqa säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

"The son of man, by what is he respected?
by his seat (position)?
Not by his seat -
by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

576 195 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("läddäfä") tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from [#66] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 601 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context, to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayya" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 195 562 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women, nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is

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562 classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagar"; as high-pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syet", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

b) Greetings and Address.

576 Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasized in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "anta" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;

"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilizes the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence:

"getoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer

"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.

"ersu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.

"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.

"ersachaw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

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000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convelescense ("gäggäm ala") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtara" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "bala mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamadi"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

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X794 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve
756 the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara,
562 particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wəcābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the
755 aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has
[832] already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

X794 776 821 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

X794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like X794 562 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

X794 776 552 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurëza" - usually generic for all male zars; "Neqäbe"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Sälamtew. The zar complex, to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks. Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar-devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

794 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

794 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, "for the zar".

Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaé" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

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X 794 562 593 [548] Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The attitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a young goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X 794 586 798 A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaë" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtära, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X 794 798

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some pancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

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T76 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, denoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who held the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Kupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Kupe Society. ibid

854 Until weaning, at the
853 age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body
of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during
the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as pro-
tecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds
and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during
childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent
(father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him
roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts.
Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly cal-
culated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The
youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retrib-
ution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to
exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered.
The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior
it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually,
with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality,
and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group
and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual
enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural
participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle,
that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines
of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial
of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female
intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Americanization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperor (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

181 178 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the connotation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 576 644 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the hierarchy where the prime"change agent", the emperor, resides. Most notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Ougsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said; and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1] and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to sell them. And because in this country the winters are divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow except with the rains, they go to sow these millet fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the months of February, March, and April. There is this same winter in a mountain called Lamá, in this kingdom of the Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lordship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these winters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great [644]
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever she went to take the communion, and even she does not now enter the church, but takes the communion at the door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 586 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

• 562 Women, some of whom are attractive and even pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

562 586 Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

562 462 357 In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest—and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 754 787 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, and social position. 186

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk. 562 • [565]* [539]

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden. [539] [841]

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders. 858 [854]

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder." 882 885 888 [867]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The traditional mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day.

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another.

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth.

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shīftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement.

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

* 753 776 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal, are in abundance, however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

* 753 * 787 776 • 562 Zars select their victims carefully, most often choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is signalled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

* 753 776 782 *[192] Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (watetey) are attributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER TWO

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND SICKMAN

*192
*756 The Amhara use a set of twenty-one, non-redundant
*759 names to categorize traditional practitioners of disease
196 prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment. These names are
*(192) listed in table 2. The most general term employed is "Habeša hakiym" ("Abyssinian healer"), and is used to designate traditional curers as a class by distinguishing them from practitioners working in Western techniques---European physicians, Ethiopian health officers, and local injectionists. The Habeša hakiyms can be sorted into three mutually exclusive categories, each defined analytically, according to shared professional titles.

Category 1. Physical manipulation of the sickman's person is dominant, and the employment of materia medica is either absent or subordinated to these physical manipulations. These healing powers are compatible with the first and second therapeutic strategies discussed in
*(192) Chapter One. Any therapist of this category, with the exception of the awalaj (midwife), can be referred to as
• (562) "wogeyša". The exclusion of the midwife is probably a
*(192) sexual one, since practitioners known as wogeyša are almost invariably male, while the awalaj is always a woman. Operationally, healers of the first category are distinguished from one another by their different organ do-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic tattoos, and although she also performs purely decorative works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 5

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• 562

THE TOKWARIY'S PRACTICE

Area Tattooed	Function		
	Prophylactic	Therapeutic	Decorative
forehead (female only)			exclusive
gums	e,f	f	present
throat (female only)	a		present
breasts (female only)			exclusive
upper arm (male only)	g	g	present
forearm	b,c*,d*	b	present
back of hand	b,c*,d*	b	present
shin to ankle (female only)	b,c*,d*	b	present

a ganel-agent, can be explained as ganel-caused if treated successfully by the following (real) practitioner chains:

(1)-->(2)-->(3), or (2)-->(3)

Because of their substantial fees, clients generally limit therapy consultations with strong debteras to episodes involving serious ailments. Since such ailments are very frequently traced to ganel agents (syndromes of types 1 and 2), the diagnostic relevance of the strong debtera's cures tends to be reinforced empirically.

THE BALAZAR

A balazar ("zar bearer") is a man or woman who has been selected as a "mount" (feres) by a zar spirit. Most often, the zar signals his interest in an individual by producing a syndrome known as kureyña. At its simplest, the ailment is characterized by chronic stomach pain, generally accompanied by headache. Within the context of Amhara nosology, these are highly ambiguous symptoms, and four alternative etiologies are possible. At its most innocuous, the ailment is classified descriptively as "hod himem ina ras mitat" (literally, "stomach ailment and headache"), and traced to gerifta and likift pathogens. The three other etiologies are sorcery (sray), divine displeasure (mekseft), and zar possession (kureyña);

*753
*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent fe- [602] males (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks
776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

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779 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

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members are unable to retain their claims to these church lands (which are intimately linked to the acquisition of leadership positions and prestige within the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

Finally, these hamlets contain three female servants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet. The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are described in Table 7. With the use of this information, the following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

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*757 119
759 (Kusil:Kabiy:k:I+) and (Yilfiyn Bašiyta:Kabiy:k*:I)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:I) and (Kowsow:Ateci:k*:I)
(Yisaal Bašiyta:Ateci:k*:II+) and (Kurtimat:Kabiy:k*:II)
In Lemmariet:
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Koruba:Seci:i:I) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Aynitila:Ateci:k*:II) and (Yisaal Bašiyta:Ateci:k*:II)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:III) and (Yisaal Bašiyta:Ateci:k*:III)
The combination of therapies owned by any one herbalist is recognized by Amhara as being entirely adventitious, although no secular herbalist is considered likely to own multiple therapies for a single disease-name specialty.

*278 Since three of Tikurmidir's herbalists are women,
*759 and two of them reside with herbalist spouses, the dis-
* [562] [592] tribution of herbalists among households is as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[162] Household with one or more herbalists:	19	16
%of Amhara households with one or more herbalists:	56%	67%

The distribution of herbalist therapies in these hamlets is further characterized by a high degree of "redundancy", that is to say, the presence of two or more therapies directed against the same named ailment, but practiced by different herbalists:

of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

bar maids.

A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly by girls and women working as servants for the less affluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

*753 *755 *756 *793 he must reorder his social environment. Preference is given to either killing his persecutor or frightening him away, through the use of sorcery or mundane violence. If ego is unable to accomplish this, he must himself move to some place where his talat can no longer affect him, or would no longer find it necessary to do so.

*753 *787 776 With zar-caused ailments, the sickman can obtain a lasting remission of symptoms only by entering into a permanent relationship with the pathogenic agent, rather than countering it. Here, the sickman withdraws from his existing moral milieu, and acknowledges, as a member of a hadra (zar coterie), a permanent dependence on the good will of the zars. Once the initial diagnosis has been confirmed and ego's zar has been successfully treated with, each succeeding disease episode binds ego still more closely to the society of zars and balazars.

• [562] The social and moral consequences of accomodating zars are very different for men and for women. For women, who constitute over eighty percent of zar-possessed folk, zar familiars offer a degree of security that the host finds difficult to obtain in human society. In contrast to other purposive agents, the pathogenic motives of zars are at once transparent and manageable: Zars sicken their hosts in order to extort gifts of jewlery and clothes, and deferential performances at the

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*753 *787 776 hadra meeting. While zars often cause painful and potentially mortal ailments, prognoses are favorable, since the zars' ultimate interests are served best by keeping their victims well enough to continue to meet their demands.

*753 *787 776 • 562 A woman who excludes zars from her disease etiologies assumes great vulnerabilities. Without zar familiars, she must build etiologies from the mortal intentions of sorcerers, poisoners, and ganels. Against these agents, a woman can generally afford to raise only weak prophylactic defenses, and the cost of expert therapy (by an awakiy debtera) is usually beyond her slender means. Unmarried townswomen are particularly vulnerable in this regard, since they are without interested mates to purchase necessary debtera therapy or to insist on etiologies consistent with the teachings of the Church.

For a man, zar possession is shameful, and the appearance of symptoms which might indicate a zar etiology (i.e., kureyña) are preferably traced to other pathogenic agents. While the hadra provides its female members with opportunities for self-assertiveness otherwise impossible, the man who accepts the suzerainty of the zars commits himself to performances and associations which contradict the customary social behavior of Amhara men. He is serateña (servant, usually female) or even bariya (slave) to zar whims, which cast him in demeaning

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and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal, rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men. What is more, his shame is public, since the zars generally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored border be woven into the normally undecorated white toga of Amhara men.

The type of practitioner that a client consults influences the final etiology with which his disease episode is finally rationalized. In the context of category three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable of translating the disease episode into a confirmation of the client's normative social state. Failing more innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sick-man as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud (i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual access to women.